



Arkansas Department of Education

Johnny Key, Commissioner

Transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education

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ADE, ArkansasIDEAS Launch Science of Reading Professional Development

LITTLE ROCK — The Arkansas Department of Education and Arkansas Educational Television Network's ArkansasIDEAS are pleased to announce the June 1 rollout of the first Science of Reading online professional development course.

The "Science of Reading: The Right to Read Act" course was developed to assist teachers with meeting the requirements of Act 1063 (the Right to Read Act) that was passed by the Arkansas General Assembly in 2017. Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, all kindergarten through sixth-grade teachers and kindergarten through 12th-grade special education teachers must show proficiency in the knowledge and practice of scientific reading instruction (evidence-based practices that teach a student how to learn to read). All other teachers must demonstrate an awareness. In addition to Act 1063, Act 416 of 2017 requires education preparation programs to teach scientific reading instruction.

"Developing strong readers is a result of excellent instructional practices," ADE Commissioner Johnny Key said. "The development of this online learning pathway gives teachers one of many options of available professional development to help them improve their reading instruction skills. We are excited to partner with AETN's ArkansasIDEAS and look forward to the positive change that will result through this enhanced focus on reading instruction. Let's all work together to build a culture of reading in Arkansas."

"For over a decade, AETN and ADE have worked together to positively impact student success through professional development for Arkansas educators," AETN Executive Director Courtney Pledger said. "We take great pride in providing strong educational programs, experiences and resources for all citizens as Arkansas' only statewide public media outlet. Literacy and helping to nourish a culture of reading in our state are top priorities. A course like 'The Science of Reading' offers the opportunity for powerful influence on student achievement and benefit to countless Arkansans. Through our learning management system, 'The Science of Reading' will be accessed by 47,000 Arkansas educators."

ADE and Gov. Asa Hutchinson made building a culture of reading a priority in Arkansas with the launch of R.I.S.E. Arkansas, or the Reading Initiative for Student Excellence, in January 2017. With the Science of Reading learning pathway, Arkansas is meeting the initiative's first goal of improving and strengthening reading instruction. Hutchinson recently recorded a short video that promotes the new learning pathway, as well as R.I.S.E. Arkansas. The video can be viewed at the following link: <https://youtu.be/DLTgu7FbjGA>.

This online learning pathway will offer 18 hours of professional development through ArkansasIDEAS. A new course will be released in July and August, with additional courses planned for release every two months until the spring of 2021. Teachers also can receive approved professional development through education service cooperatives around the state.

To access the online professional development, visit ArkansasIDEAS at ideas.aetn.org. To learn more about R.I.S.E. Arkansas, go to RISEArkansas.org.

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